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## DIEZ'S "POOR DESERTED WOMAN."

THIS beautiful picture, of which we present an engraving, is a specimen of that style of modern German art, of which Maës and Riedel of Rome are the creators, and which aims to depict soul and sentiment, rather than the common action of numerous figures grouped together. In this school a peculiar and novel manipulation of the light, and a thoroughly plastic power over the finest and most effective colouring, have also been achieved. Diez, well known to the courts of Europe as a portrait-painter of great eminence, has, besides striking into the path opened by Maës and Riedel, endeavoured to avail himself with equal address of the good points of the modern Belgian painters, as the picture unmistakably shows.

babe. She does not fold her hands, she lets them sink down in her self-forgetful anguish. From an amber heart—probably a keepsake of the man who has deserted her—hangs the rosary. A second child she holds with the hand which hangs down; the eye in the little curly head looks wandringly and vacantly around. The little one does not as yet understand the anguish of his mother; he has only a vague foreboding of it. Wearied with the way and with standing, he is resting on the right foot, and touches the ground only lightly with the toe of the other. The thin and spare clothing which the child wears scarcely reaches to the knees; and beneath we see the naked tiny bones, in which a slight, not



A POOR DESERTED WOMAN.—FROM A PAINTING BY DIEZ.

The oftener the picture is looked at, the more does it rivet attention. No painful striving after effect mars the impression made by this masterpiece. The artist's resources are employed with such simplicity and ease, art has so felicitously mastered all difficulties, that we discern the individual life in the general truth, and the higher moral meaning in the unpretending naturalness of the representation. A poor deserted woman—in the chapel before the image of the Virgin, who has herself passed through the ordeal of bitterest anguish! She kneels on the stone steps of the altar, her right foot stretched backwards and resting on the tip, whilst the shoe bears witness of the wearisome way through which she has travelled. In her hands, supported on her knee, lies a sleeping

ungraceful curve, as in the case of most children, is perceived. Through a window behind the altar streams the light, and we see how its slanting rays fall on the shoulders and hair of the group. Without any unpleasant hunting after effect, it is so felicitously rendered available, that we have a free view of the group before the altar. The mother has a handkerchief bound round her head; her hair betrays by only slight indications the negligence of misery; her countenance makes no parade of suffering; her clothing clamours not for the voice of sympathy. She is young, not exactly beautiful, but well made. Before, she was happy in spite of her poverty; but alas! she is now a poor deserted woman, who, with the children of her sorrow, seeks the consolations of religion. There is

nothing unusual in the countenance itself—it is only refined by anguish. Clouds of tears, that refuse to break, bedim the eye. The long night of grief, the sleepless anxiety for her little children, and love to their father, which banishes every trace of bitterness from her countenance, have exhausted her power of weeping. She can no longer shed tears; a single touch near the corner of the mouth tells us too clearly that the grief has struggled convulsively in her heart. It is the first, sharpest, sorrow which has ploughed furrows on her face! The object of her worship reads in its lines how little good fortune she ever had, and how quickly that little has taken flight! Her anguish is self-sacrificing, like her love, simple and inartificial—and so deep, so true, welling forth so copiously from the inmost depths of her heart! She invokes the *mater dolorosa*, the ideal of maternal love; she presents before her the unsuspecting sleeping babe, which, in its touching innocence, has been guilty of no crime. She appeals to maternal love; and when she rises from her knees, in order again to roam through life, this love will comfort and guide her. A whole human life is comprehended in the moment which the picture seizes. The crisis touches the heart by the deep anguish of soul which it depicts, and by the prophetic glimpse it affords us of a long series of daily struggles. But it reveals also the victory of a mother's love, the victory of the female heart, which will hold its ground against the power of misery. Therefore it is that the picture touches and elevates at the same time; therefore it is that the best judges do not hesitate a moment in awarding it the palm of high artistic merit; therefore it is that one feels constrained to halt so long before such a picture, since it cannot fail to spell-bind and enchant every beholder.

#### FATE OF A CARAVAN IN THE DESERT.

CARAVANS leaving Damascus or Cairo, for the purpose of conveying rich presents to Mecca, demand and obtain an escort of soldiers, commanded by a colonel or general. This chief possesses sufficient authority to enforce his orders; he maintains discipline, sends forward scouts, stations sentinels round the tents at meal-times, and thus manages to keep the plundering Arabs at a respectful distance. The same order and security do not prevail in the majority of the caravans whose errand is merely commercial.

About five years ago a caravan, consisting of one hundred and twenty men and two hundred camels, was conveying various European and Egyptian fabrics and Nubian dates from Dongola to Lobeid. As it approached the well of Way, in Kardofan, six hundred Beni-Jerar Arabs, mounted upon three hundred camels, and led by one of the bravest *aquids*, passed a little to the south of the same well. They were in pursuit of a large flock of sheep belonging to the Kubabich Arabs; the shepherds, who were aware of their approach, had just left the well of Way and reached that of Elai, about a day and a half's journey from the former.

The caravan reposed in fancied security; the improvident merchants of which it was composed not having reconnoitred the desert. The enemy was within a stone's throw, and not one of the party suspected the approach of peril.

The evening before the day fixed for departure, the merchant in command gave orders to collect the camels which had been allowed, as usual, to browse the thorny shrubs of the valley. All were collected with the exception of one, which could not be found. This animal belonged to a merchant, who, fearing to lose it and seeing night approach, commanded his slave to seek traces of it and to follow them.

Upon the ground, crowded with so many camels and men, the slave discovered the track of his master's camel, which led him straight to the encampment of the Arabs, who, doubtless, had taken possession of it. They saw the slave and seized upon him. Time passed away without any news of the camel; the merchant wished to follow the path which his slave had taken, but Abd-el-Kader, from whom these facts are known, dissuaded him and offered to make some research.

He set out, climbed a hill of sand, traversed a narrow

valley, climbed a second hill, and, in the middle of a very dark night, saw before him the fires lighted by the Arabs; protected by the darkness, he stopped an instant, counted the fires and the men, and much excited by what he had seen, speedily regained the encampment of the caravan.

The merchants were at their evening meal; he called them together, told them what he had seen, and invited them to deliberate upon the best course to pursue.

The question was then put: "Shall we set out this night, or shall we wait for daylight?" It would have been much wiser to have adopted the first plan.

The objection which induced them to put off their departure until sunrise was, that when they loaded their camels they would be sure to make a noise, and, therefore, their departure would be discovered by the enemy.

This was true, but the Arabs were asleep; they must first awake and collect their camels. All this would require time, and once on their way, besides that the caravan could change its route, and that it would be difficult to follow the track in the night, they could offer a much more powerful resistance than during the long and difficult operation of loading, which would, without fail, be interrupted on the morrow.

At dawn, as the camel-drivers were engaged in this task, a hundred camels mounted by two hundred men passed into the valley. The men leapt from the backs of the animals and began to run towards the caravan. Those who composed it, thinking that they would have no other enemy to contend with, offered some resistance. They fired on the Arabs, who, according to custom, were only armed with lances; but all at once, just as the caravan had regained a little confidence, a hundred camels appeared from one side and the same number from the other, so that the enemy amounted to four hundred. It would be impossible to describe the confusion and terror which now reigned. Surrounded by the Arabs, the merchants and camel-drivers were quickly massacred; Abd-el-Kader alone, not having received any injury, threw himself upon the ground as though he were dead. An Arab pricked him with his lance, and discovering, by the movement which he made, that he still lived, seized and led him before the *aquid*.

The butchery was ended; but the *aquid*, infuriated by the smell of blood, proposed to tie the unfortunate man to a tree and to kill him by casting javelins at him. He was bound, and upon a sign from the chief, the horrible sport began; but by a singular chance, which he considered a miracle, ten or twelve lances glanced past Abd-el-Kader without touching him. "Assuredly," cried the astonished *aquid*, "you have a tough life, or else God is not willing that you should die; you are free to go where you please." They unbound him, stripped him of his clothing, and he found himself free indeed, but in the midst of the desert with neither food nor clothing. "Well," said the *aquid*, "you do not go? What are you waiting for?" "Where should I go?" replied Abd-el-Kader; "where are my provisions? I have not even a leathern bottle to carry water."

The Arabs were engaged in dividing the dates which they had taken from the Jellabs, and, in order that all might have an equal share, they were patiently counting them one by one. Their chief took thirty, gave them to Abd-el-Kader, and espying a little bottle which did not seem to him to be in very good condition, added it to the present. "Go now," said he, "and may God protect you!" Abd-el-Kader, quite in perplexity as to what direction he ought to take, approached the well to fill his bottle; he then perceived that it leaked; he knew it would be in vain to ask for another, and therefore resolved to remain in the neighbourhood of the well. In the evening the Arabs had disappeared, and this unfortunate man had eaten his thirty dates without being able to appease his hunger. Happily the ravine, which led to the well, was covered with those thorny shrubs, called *Sidr* by the Arabs, and *Ithammis Lotus* by botanists. The fruit of the *Sidr* formed the food of the *Lotophagi*, and the Arabs, who give the name of *nabak* to this little berry, still use it.